



## City proposes changes to transient room tax

Discussion to continue in November

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

In the past year, Cannon Beach took in more than \$3.8 million in transient room tax. Without proper tracking and enforcement, how much is being unreported is unknown.

The city is considering making

changes to a city ordinance that would require lodging intermediaries like AirBnB and Expedia to pay taxes directly to the city.

These entities are subject to paying the transient room tax, but keeping large online booking companies accountable for providing the information necessary for the city to file

tax returns is proving to be a challenge, Cannon Beach Finance Director Laurie Sawrey said.

### Issues

In the hospitality industry, it is becoming increasingly common for hotels and short-term rental owners to sell their rooms through intermediary companies like Hotwire and AirBnB, who will rent them out on their sites and take a

cut of the profits made off the sale of the room.

In 2013, the state Legislature passed a law requiring those intermediaries to deliver tax collections directly to the taxing community. She wants the city to amend the city code to follow this state law, which will help in the collection, accounting and enforcement of the tax.

"If a hotel sells 100 rooms to an

intermediary, we have no tracking mechanisms to see who they sold them to," Sawrey said at the Tuesday, Sept. 12, City Council work session. "From the intermediaries, we want more information of who they purchased the room from."

City staff have been always asking for this information, but so far most intermediaries have not been

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Choral group celebrates 30 years

## A milestone for the Cannon Beach Chorus

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Not a minute is wasted at the Cannon Beach Chorus.

Every Monday night, the lobby of the Cannon Beach Community Church is packed with more than 60 singers with name tags that show people from Ocean Park, Washington to Oceanside ready to sing at 6:30 p.m. They come from all walks of life, with some members still in high school and others more than 80-years-old.

And at the helm is their director, John Buehler, who made sure warm ups began no later than 6:31 p.m.

"The discipline is what allows people to do this casually," Buehler said. "You don't get this time back, so I plan to the minute. There are many different needs

that need to be addressed every minute, and it's supremely important that people's time is honored."

But moments of seriousness were laced with light-hearted fun.

"Bless your heart but not your throats," Buehler said after the choir was trending flat after multiple repetitions of a phrase, a comment met with a roll of laughter.

In its 30th anniversary, the choir, currently in the throes of preparing a Christmas Oratorio, is known to perform regularly in the community and across the coast. To celebrate, the choir will have a piece commissioned especially for them to premiere next spring.

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Dr. John Buehler conducts the Cannon Beach Chorus during a rehearsal. The group is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

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## School building repairs are on hold

Plugging holes until new campus in 2020

By R.J. Marx  
Cannon Beach Gazette

SEASIDE — Gearhart Elementary School, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School were built with an expected lifespan of 45 to 50 years. Each school has been used well beyond that span.

A new school campus is not expected to open until fall 2020. Until then, schools deemed old and at risk in a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami continue to house students.

A fact sheet by proponents of the successful \$99.7 million bond measure for the new campus last year described the three schools as in a state of deterioration, including crumbling concrete that is decreasing structural integrity, rusted pipes, leaky roofs, old electrical wiring, and failing heating systems. "It would cost well over \$30 million to fully correct the roofing, plumbing, heating, and electrical issues," Save Our Schools wrote at the time. "The deteriorating structural walls and seismic issues cannot be corrected."

Maintenance crews spent the summer polishing floors, painting and doing exterior work to keep pests at bay.

"We did not focus on any major repairs in any of the buildings, or any improvements or anything like that," Chuck Loesch, the school district's head of maintenance, said. "With an up-and-coming new school, we are just maintaining what we have."

The budgeted cost of building maintenance stands at about \$306,000 for repair of school buildings, according to the district's budget, a figure less than half the \$800,000 the year before.

"We are looking at any maintenance we need to do," Superintendent Sheila Roley said. "Do we need this for student safety? Is this something that is imminent or urgent? Do we need to address it, or is it something we can maybe work out? Because we know there will be a new facility."

What Roley described as "the three legs of the stool" — architect, project manager and general contractor — are now in the preliminary stages and groundbreaking of a new K-12 campus. The campus is expected

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## Tom Drumheller, 64, dies after short illness

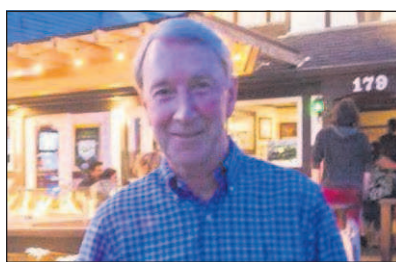
Key figure in Cannon Beach tourism

By R.J. Marx and Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Tom Drumheller, chief executive officer of Escape Lodging and co-owner of Tom's Fish & Chips, died Sunday morning at his home after a short illness. He was 64.

Drumheller, a former chairman of the city's Tourism and Arts Commission, played a key role in the region's hospitality industry and beyond, serving on the board of directors of Travel Portland and most recently as founder of the 62,773-square-foot Columbia Point Hotel in Tri-Cities, Washington.

"I've known Tom for 30 years, and we've been business partners since 1999," Patrick Nofield, the president of Escape Lodging, said. "There's nobody



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tom Drumheller, a key figure in Cannon Beach tourism, died Sunday.

like him. It's a huge void — not just for those who loved him, but for our community, and the people of eastern Washington where he grew up."

According to Nofield, Drumheller was diagnosed with metastasized colon cancer in August. "When they were in the hospital they found cancer was all over his body," Nofield said. "It was totally unexpected."

Nofield said Drumheller did not

want to spend his last days in the hospital, so he returned to home hospice in Cannon Beach.

He had friends and family members come from all over the Northwest, Nofield said. "For the last week of his life it was like one continuous party. Tom was greeting everyone, engaging people, meeting with employees, sharing stories, sharing humor."

### A career in hospitality

John Thomas Drumheller, known as "Tom," was born in Walla Walla, Washington, on Aug. 15, 1953. Drumheller's family worked in the hardware business for generations.

Growing up, he watched how his father used humor and respect to develop strong relationships with customers.

That set the foundation of his philosophy toward the hotel and restaurant industry, where he worked for 25 years before establishing his own business.

A key experience came when Tom turned 9; he was hit by a baseball, Nofield said.

The ball concaved his skull and he lost all ability to talk. "They were able to do surgery and put the skull where it needed to be, but he had to relearn himself to talk," Nofield said.

His mother, a schoolteacher, read him the Dr. Seuss classic, "Thidwick, the Big-Hearted Moose."

The incident inspired Drumheller's future career direction, Nofield said.

"Thidwick always wanted to take care of his guests, and of all the people I have ever met, Tom was the most hospitable person to anyone, whether it be a housekeeper at one of our hotels, or whether it be a billionaire developer," Nofield said. "He treats them all the same. All with love and all with encouragement."

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